DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 275 217 HE 019 511

AUTHOR Webb, Vergial S.
TITLE The Role of Critical Incidents in Teaching and Administration in Higher Education.
PUB DATE [84]
NOTE 23p.; Research supported by a faculty research grant from the Morgan State University-University of Pennsylvania Project at Morgan State University.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Administrator Attitudes; *Administrators; College Administration; *College Faculty; *College Instruction; Employment Practices; Faculty College Relationship; Higher Education; Interpersonal Relationship; *Job Performance; Peer Relationship; Personnel Policy; Professional Recognition; Teacher Attitudes; *Teacher Effectiveness; Teaching Conditions; Urban Universities; *Work Environment
IDENTIFIERS *Critical Events

ABSTRACT

Critical incidents in college teaching and administration were studied, based on survey responses from 356 faculty at 31 urban institutions in various regions of the United States. "Critical incidents" either create or damage faculty or administrators' motivation for achieving excellence in their task performance. In addition to determining the occurrence of critical incidents and their effect upon the teaching or administrative performance of faculty and administrators, samplings of autobiographical descriptions of positive/negative effects of these incidents on performance were acquired. The critical incidents were categorized according to specific headings: professional worth, institutional policies and procedures, faculty and administrative work style, job assignment, personal/interpersonal problems, and work quality. Critical incidents occurred among faculty and administrators, but they were experienced more often by faculty than by administrators. Also, the occurrence of critical incidents was more frequent among females than males. The critical incidents pertaining to professional worth had more positive than negative effects in teaching and administration, while those pertaining to faculty/administrative work style and institutional policies and procedures had more negative effects. Narrative and autobiographical descriptions for six participants are included. (SW)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED2752217

THE ROLE OF CRITICAL INCIDENTS IN TEACHING AND ADMINISTRATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Vergial S Webb

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

Vergial S. Webb
Professor of Education
Morgan State University
Baltimore, Maryland 21239

HE 017 511

THE ROLE OF CRITICAL INCIDENTS IN TEACHING AND ADMINISTRATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Vergial S. Webb
Professor of Education
Morgan State University
Baltimore, Maryland 21239

This report is a discussion of a survey. It is an open-ended investigation of critical incidents in teaching and administration in higher education. Participants consisted of 356 faculty at 31 urban-oriented colleges and universities in the various regions of the United States. The participants responded to a survey questionnaire used to ascertain the occurrence of critical incidents and their effect upon the teaching or administrative performance of faculty and administrators; and to acquire samplings of autobiographical descriptions of faculty and administrators having had positive or negative effects upon their teaching and/or administrative performance. The critical incidents were categorized according to specific headings; "professional worth", "institutional policies and procedures", "faculty/administrative work style", "job assignment", "personal/interpersonal problems", and "work quality". According to the responses from the participants, critical incidents occurred among faculty and administrators; they were experienced more often by faculty than by administrators; and , the occurrence of critical incidents was more frequent among females than males. Among those having experienced critical incidents, more participants had negative effects from critical incidents than did others who experienced critical incidents. The critical incidents pertaining to "professional worth" were those having had more positive than negative effects in teaching and administration while those pertaining to "faculty/administrative work style" and "institutional policies and procedures" were those having had more negative effects. Findings of this investigation suggest the need for further research.

This research was supported by a Faculty Research Grant from the Morgan State University - University of Pennsylvania Project at Morgan State University. The author extends expressions of appreciation to Dr. Fredric Bredahl-Petersen and Dr. Charles Fletcher of Morgan State University, for their major contributions, and to Dr. Clinton I. Chase of Indiana University for his assistance.

THE ROLE OF CRITICAL INCIDENTS IN TEACHING AND ADMINISTRATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

INTRODUCTION

It is assumed that a primary goal of public education is to raise the level of instructional and administrative efficiency at educational institutions; to promote higher educational standards; and to foster greater learning achievement of students. The process thrives upon the knowledge and skills of teachers and administrators as they perform their assigned tasks. Hence, goal achievement is contingent upon task performance.

It is believed that the effectiveness of one's teaching or administrative performance is related to behavioral factors such as motivation and need satisfaction. The importance of both should be recognized as having great influence upon one's task performance. Rarely will teachers or administrators be necessarily committed to excellence in their performance unless self-satisfaction and motivation, intrinsic motivation, that is, are achieved from their efforts.

The working environment should provide a kind of personal interaction by which self-satisfaction and intrinsic motivation are reinforced. It is important that one's experiences in the working environment contribute positively to these factors.

This investigation was concerned with the occurrence and description of the kinds of experiences called "critical incidents" by faculty and administrators, viewed as those which created or damaged their motivation for the achievement of excellence in their task performances. It was an open-ended inquiry process for obtaining their interpretation of "critical incidents" which influenced positively or negatively their self-satisfaction or motivation in performing their assigned tasks. Not all the data are reported herein, only those having more rather than less direct bearing on the contents of this report.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

There are very few studies, if any, concerning the influence of critical incidents upon task performance of faculty and administrators in higher education. Recent research on the subject is practically non-existent. However, the critical incident technique is viewed as sound and applicable to this investigation[1]. Futher, the process is efficient [2], and steps for implementing the critical incident technique are delineated[3]. They are utilized in this investigation.

Pisoro[4] engaged in an investigation of critical elements in public school teaching and elicited a typology of behaviors, attitudes, and characteristics considered by school administrators and by certain school board members to be "typical" of highly effective and highly non-effective teachers. From another aspect of school operation, Corsini and Howard[5], in their case study of "Classroom Crises," collected "critical incidents" characterizing problems faced by certain elementary school teachers throughout the nation. The incidents reflected upon the respondents' perceptions of their roles and their philosophical and psychological state as teachers in dealing with interpersonal problems in the classroom.

---

[1]Flanagan, John C., "The Critical Incident Technique," Psychological bulletin, 51: 327-358, 1954.

[2]Flanagan, op. cit., p. 328.

[3]Ryans, D.G., "Characteristics of Teachers," Washington, D.C.: American Council on Education, 1960, pp. 79 - 83.

[4]Pisoro, Samuel E., "A Study of Critical Elements in Teacher Effectiveness in Indiana City, Town, and Consolidated Schools." Unpublished Dissertation, Indiana University, Bloomington, 1958.

[5]Corsini, R.J. and D.D. Howard, Critical Incidents in Teaching, Englewood Cliffs, N.J., Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1964.

In connection with these findings was an investigation by Calia and Corsini[6], who also made a collection of "critical incidents" reflecting problems of ethics, theory, and proper role behavior confronted by school counselors and the reactions of consultants to the counselors' methods of handling them.

Similar studies at the junior college level may have further implications for this investigation. For example, Gloster[7] in his investigation of faculty morale of full-time faculty at a community college, stressed the importance of "morale factors" and the influence of philosophical, psychological and sociological variables upon job satisfaction and performance. The author's taxonomy of morale factors included those such as salary, quality of professional leadership and supervision, and the opportunities for teachers to participate in educational planning and policy making. Similarly, Cooler[8], in his investigation of morale and teaching effectiveness of junior college teachers, found that a significant relationship existed between job satisfaction and teaching effectiveness. He states that: "certain situations, environmental factors, and motivational determinants will result in greater work effectiveness." And, in support of Cooper's findings, Young[9] asserts that environmental factors of stress and anxiety may tend to destroy effectiveness in teaching performance.

---

[6]Calia, Vincent F. and Raymond J. Corsini, Critical Incidents in School Counseling, Englewood Cliffs, N.J., Prentice-Hall, Inc. 1973, pp. 2-3.

[7]Gloster, Emily D., "A Faculty Morale Study in a Community College," Unpublished Dissertation, The University of California, Los Angeles, 1977, p.10.

[8]Cooper, John F., "The Morale and Teaching Effectiveness of Junior College Teachers," Unpublished Dissertation, The University of California, Los Angeles, 1977, p. 10.

[9]Young, Bettie B., "Anxiety and Stress: How They Affect Teachers, Teaching," National Association of Secondary School Principals' Bulletin, Vol. 62, No. 421, November 1978, pp. 78 -83.

In view of the findings on critical incidents and their influence upon job performance at the elementary, high school, and junior college levels, a similar investigation of critical incidents in teaching and administration at the college and university levels seemed logical.

PURPOSE OF STUDY

That critical incidents do occur among faculty and administrators at the college and university levels as well as at the elementary and secondary levels, as research shows, is a logical assumption. This investigation, therefore, was an exploratory, open-ended inquiry approach for obtaining information. Specifically, the purpose of the study was to (1) investigate the occurrence of critical incidents of faculty and administrators at the college and university levels which, in their interpretation, influenced their task performance positiveiy or negatively; (2) obtain brief narratives of critical incidents and samplings of autobiographical descriptions of critical incidents from faculty and administrators with their indications of such incidents as having had positive or negative effects upon their teaching or administrative performance; and (3) categorize such narratives and descriptions according to types and rank order of frequency and, with this taxonomy, identify those with the indications of participants as having had positive, negative, both positive and negative, or neither effect upon teaching or administrative performance.

METHODS AND PROCEDURE

For the purpose of this investigation, the expression "critical incident" is defined as:

> a subjectively defined problematic situation which, in the participants' view or interpretation, caused significant changes (positive or negative) in the participants' job performance.

The procedures for implementing and reporting the study included the following steps: (1) construction and application of a research instrument; (2) solicitation and selection of research participants; and (3) collection and analysis of data.

Research Instrument and Application

For the purpose of the study, a survey questionnaire was constructed. The instrument included two parts, consisting of a total of twenty-eight questions of multiple choice, LIKERT-scaled, and open-ended narratives. Also, the questionnaire included: (1) demographic items, such as age, sex, race, and academic degrees of participants in Part I; and (2) items for showing the frequency of narratives and autobiographical descriptions of critical incidents given by the participants in Part II. For the purpose of validation of the questionnaire instrument, a pilot survey was conducted with the participation of faculty and administrators comparable to those engaged in the study.

Solicitation and Selection of Participants

A list of colleges and universities located in the various regions of the United status (northern, southern, eastern and western) was used for the solicitation of participants in the study. From listings in college and university catalogues and directories, names of faculty and administrators, unknown to the investigator, in departments, schools, and colleges of education were selected. Written correspondences requesting their participation were mailed to solicited participants.

The participants were selected on the basis of their affirmative responses A total of three hundred fifty-six (356) faculty and administrators with a minimum of 5 years of academic experience at institutions of higher education constituted the population for the investigation.

The participants were assured of strict confidentiality. None were identified by name. Instead, code numbers and serial numbers were used for communication purposes. The participants were thanked for their participation.

Collection and Treatment of Data

The analysis of data consisted of two parts; (1) an analysis of demographic data in Part I; and (2) an analysis of the narratives and the autobiographical descriptions of critical incidents in Part II. Data from the instrument were appropriately collected and analyzed.

(PART I)

Population - Demographic data from the survey returns were analyzed to provide general information pertaining to the population of the participants. Of the total population of 356 respondents, two hundred and twenty four (224) were females and one hundred and thirty two (132) were males. An overwhelming majority, sixty nine percent (69%) of the participants were employed in schools of education while fourteen percent (14%) were employed in departments of education. Seventeen percent (17%) of the participants were employed in other academic areas.

Positions and Degrees - The number of participants holding faculty or administrative positions and those with respective academic rank and degrees were varied. Some participants held faculty and administrative positions jointly.

Seventy seven percent (77%) of the participants were faculty members, nineteen percent (19%) were administrators, and four percent (4%) were those unclassified. Eighty four percent (84%) of the participants held doctorate degrees and fourteen (14%) held masters degrees.

Rank - Out of the total population of the participants, forty two percent (42%) held the rank of full professor; thirty seven percent (37%) held the rank of associate professor; and eighteen percent (18%) held the rank of assistant professor. Table I shows the percent of participants identified in the categories of positions, degrees, and rank.

TABLE I
Classifications Of Positions, Academic Degrees
And Rank Of Participants

Classification of Positions of Participants			Academic Degrees of Participants			Academic Rank of Participants			
Administrators	Faculty	Unclassified	Doctorate	Masters	Other	Professor	Assoc. Prof.	Asst. Prof.	Other
19%	77%	4%	84%	14%	2%	42%	37%	18%	3%

Analysis of data revealed also that forty-six percent (46%) of the faculty participants had spent 11 years or more at their present institution, while eleven percent (11%) of administrators had spent 11 years or more at their present institution.

Age The core years of the participants in the study ranged from thirty-one to sixty (31-60) with approximately eighty-eight percent (88%) in this category. The majority of the participants (90%) exceeded the age of thirty years, including approximately 27 participants nearing retirement age. Only six of the participants were younger than thirty (30) years of age.

Race The ethnic representations of participants in the study included Blacks, Caucasians, Hispanics, Asians, and American Indians. Ninety-four percent (94%) of the participants were representatives of Black (23%) and Caucasian (71%) racial groups, with the overwhelming majority of participants in the study being Caucasians. Six percent (6%) were representatives of other racial groups. According to the analysis, the typical participant was identified as a female Caucasian, over 30 years of age with the rank of an associate professor, employed at an American university in a school of education.

(PART II)

The specific purpose of this investigation was achieved in the analysis of data shown in Part II: (1) to investigate the occurrence of critical incidents of faculty and administrators, at the college and university levels and, in their interpretation, ascertain whether or not such critical incidents had positive or negative influence upon their task performance; (2) to obtain brief narratives of critical incidents and samplings of autobiographical descriptions from faculty and administrators identified as those having had positive, negative, both positive or negative, or neither, effect upon their task performance; and (3) to categorize such narratives and descriptions according to types and in rank order of frequency, and with this taxonomy, identify those categories with the percentage of the frequency of responses: "positive", "negative", both "positive and negative", and "neither".

Analysis of data in Table II of the study showed the frequency of positive or negative responses by participants to the questions of having experienced critical incidents. Out of the total population of three hundred fifty six (356) participants, three hundred forty seven participants (347) consisting of 128 males and 219 females responded to the questions pertaining to the critical incident variables. Of this number 69.7% responded positively to the questions as having experienced a personal critical incident, while 30.3% responded negatively to this question. When the participants who had experienced a critical incident (69.7%) were asked to indicate the effect of the incident upon their teaching or administrative performance, 12.6% of the participants responded "positive effect", 30.1% responded "negative effect", 25% responded both "positive and negative" effect, and 2% responded "neither".

The number of females responding to the critical incident variables was twice the number of males. Analysis of frequency of responses of participants to the critical incident variables, according to sex and job classification, shows the number of males who experienced critical incidents as compared with that of females, and the number of faculty who experienced critical incidents as compared with that of administrators. The frequency of responses according to sex and job classification to the critical incident variables is illustrated in Table II and Table III.

Analysis of the racial representation of the participants who experienced critical incidents projected Blacks and Caucasians mainly. Approximately 66% of the Black participants were cited as having experienced critical incidents, while slightly more than 66% of the Causasian participants experienced the same.

Analysis of data in Part II also consisted of categorizing, according to types, the combined narratives and autobiographical descriptions of the critical incidents given by the participants. The descriptions were read and categorized in rank order under broad topic headings, using the Work Atmosphere Questionnaire[10] items as a source of reference. Further analysis was made to show the order of frequency of narratives and autobiographical descriptions according to the topic headings, and to show the percents of responses with the effects of the critical incidents given, as illustrated in Table IV.

---

[10]By permission of James K. Hoffmeister and Donald R. Miller, Test Analysis and Development Corporation, Boulder, Colorado.

TABLE II
Frequency Of Responses To The Critical Incident Variable According To Sex

Sex	Critical Incident		Row Total
	Yes	No	
1 Female	156 71.2 65.3 45.0	63 28.8 58.3 18.2	219 63.1
2 Male	83 64.8 34.7 23.9	45 35.2 41.7 13.0	128 36.9
Column	239 68.9	108 31.1	347 100.0

(The Chi Square Value was greater than .05 indicating no significant difference.)

TABLE III
Frequency Of Responses To The Critical Incident Variable According To Job Classification

Position	Critical Incident		Row Total
	Yes	No	
1 Faculty	188 70.1 78.3 54.0	80 29.9 74.1 23.0	268 77.0
2 Adminis-trator	52 65.0 21.7 14.9	28 35.0 25.9 8.0	80 23.0
Column Total	240 69.0	108 31.0	348 100.0

(The Chi Square Value was greater than .05 indicating no significant difference.)

The broad topic heading having the most frequent responses was Professional Worth. Under this topic are items such as, feeling of acceptance, respect, encouragement, appreciation of extra effort, share in decision-making, and opportunity for achievement.

Second in rank order was the topic heading, Institutional Policies and Procedures, which includes items such as salaries, grievance procedures, tenure and promotion.

The broad topic heading, Faculty/Administrative Work Style, ranked third in order of frequency. This topic includes items such as management, effectiveness in dealing with problems or issues, evaluation, blame, and ridicule.

Next in rank order was Job Assignment, including items such as implementation, planning, description, support, competence, and freedom.

Fifth in rank order was the topic heading, Personal or Interpersonal Problems. This topic heading includes items such as grievances, unrests, and retrenchment. The broad topic heading receiving the least responses was Work Quality.

Generally, the narrative and autobiographical descriptions of the critical incidents most frequently received were those categorizing Professional Worth, Institutional Policies and Procedures, and Faculty/Administrative Work Style. More than 50% of the critical incidents categorizing Professional Worth were identified by the participants as having had positive effects. On the other hand, 50% of the critical incidents categorizing Work Style were identified as having had negative effects, while 56.4% of the critical incidents categorizing Institutional Policies and Procedures were identified also as having had negative effects, as shown in Table IV.

TABLE IV

Rank Order of Frequency of Narratives and Autobiographical Descriptions of Critical Incidents According to Broad Topic Headings Showing Percent of Responses with the Effects of Critical Incidents Given

Rank Order	Topic Headings in Order of Frequency	Percent of Resposes			
		Positive	Negative	Both Positive & Negative	Neither
I	Professional Worth(feeling of acceptance, respect, encouragement, appreciation for extra effort; share in decision making; opportunity for achievment)	52.1%	26.0%	21.9%	0.0%
II	Institutional Policies and Procedures (Salaries; grievance procedures; tenure; promotion)	7.3%	56.4%	34.5%	1.8%
III	Faculty/Administrator Work Style (Management; effectiveness in dealing with problems/issues; evaluation; blame, ridicule)	8.3%	50.0%	41.7%	0.0%
IV	Job Assignment (Implementation, planning, description; support; competence; freedom)	12.9%	61.3%	25.8%	0.0%
V	Personal/Interpersonal Problems; Grievances; Unrests; Retrenchment (student, faculty, administrator)	13.6%	27.3%	59.1%	0.0%
VI	Work Quality (faculty, administrative emphasis)	20.0%	53.3%	20.0%	6.7%

According to the responses from the participants, there was clear indication that each understood the definition of the term "critical incident" as given. Further, approximately 95% of the participants who responded positively to the question of having experienced a critical incident gave evidence of their having understood the question (s), answered the question (s) in sufficient detail and with narrative, and in their autobiographical descriptions, gave their impression of the importance of the critical incident given.

Selected samples of narratives and autobiographical descriptions of critical incidents of the participants are shown in the Appendix.

FINDINGS

As indicated earlier in this discussion, the purpose of this investigation was to ascertain the occurrence of critical incidents and their effect upon the teaching or administrative performance of faculty and administrators at the college and university levels; and to acquire narratives and samplings of autobiographical descriptions of critical incidents having had positive, negative, both, or neither effect upon the teaching or administrative performance of faculty and administrators. A report of findings is as follows:

1. According to the participants in this investigation, critical incidents occurred among faculty and administrators. Approximately 70 percent responded positively to the question as having experienced a critical incident while 30 percent responded negatively to this question.

2. Of the number of participants who had experienced critical incidents, thirteen percent (13%) indicated that the critical incident had positive effect upon their teaching or adminstrative performance; thirty percent (30%) indicated that the critical incident had negative effect upon their teaching or administrative performance; twenty five percent (25%) responded as both positive and negative effect; and two (2%) responded neither.

3. The narratives and autobiographical descriptions of critical incidents categorizing "professional worth", "institutional policies and procedures", and "faculty/administrative work style" were those most frequently indicated by the participants of this investigation. While more than fifty percent (50%) of those categorizing "professional worth" were indicated by the participants as having positive effects upon their teaching or administrative performance, fifty percent (50%) of the critical incident narratives and autobiographical descriptions reflecting upon "work style" were identified by the participants as having had negative effects upon their teaching or administrative performance. Moreover, fifty six percent (56%) of the critical incident narratives and autobiographical descriptions reflecting upon "unstitutional policies and procedures" were viewed by the participants as having had negative effects upon their teaching or administrative performance.

DISCUSSION

This survey report is viewed as suggesting the need for further investigation. Additional study of the importance of factors such as professional worth, institutional policies and procedures, and faculty and administrative work styles at the college and university levels should be pursued. That critical incidents, as defined in this report, are more often experienced by females than males suggest also implications for more in-dept research.

The positive relationship between one's rank, the occurrence, and the effect of a critical incident as shown in this investigation suggest that as one progresses in rank, one may be less likely to be affected adversely by critical incidents. Moreover, implications also suggest that as one becomes more experienced, as a college teacher or administrator, the likelihood of having critical incidents may increase. However, the effect of the incident may be viewed as more positive rather than more negative by those experiencing the critical incidents.

APPENDIX

Samples of Narratives and Autobiographical Descriptions
Of Critical Incidents Given by Participants

Participant A

Caucasian Male
Age: 31 - 40
Rank: Associate Professor
Degree: Doctorate
Position: Faculty

Essentially, the critical incidents were the rewards, extrinsic and intrinsic, of being in an academic community. Research was rewarded by new knowledge and good grades. Research earned me my masters degree and Ph.D. My credentials and publications earned me the reward of a teaching position. My teaching and research and publications earned me new knowledge and respect along with merit pay increases.

In short, my work in an academic community gave me personal, professional and financial satisfaction at every stage of my career: student, instructor, assistant professor, associate professor with tenure, acting department chair, sabbatical, etc. So to an extent each challenge, successfully completed to my satisfaction was a critical incident. In addition, each challenge successfully completed and given external reward by others was also a critical incident. Inasmuch as most of my challenges have been successfully met, the rewards have been positive.

Participant B

Caucasian Female
Age: 61 - 65
Rank: Professor
Degree: Doctorate
Position: Faculty

A student failed a methods course I teach which is a pre-requisite to student teaching. I do not give F's without serious reflection and concrete evidence of failure. I felt that the student was not a good candidate for the credential. According to University regulations, the course could be taken over, but the F would have to be averaged with the grade received on the second attempt. A grade of C is required in all methods classes. The student took the class over from another instructor and received a C which, when averaged with the F, would still have prevented enrollment in student teaching. The student was, nevertheless, allowed to enroll in the directed teaching course. This also resulted in failure.
I felt that my judgment had been questioned and that University requirements had been waived without reason. The student had been subjected to another unnecessary experience with failure and other people, including children, had suffered as a result.

It is not easy to give a grade of F when the threat of a grievance being brought against you is ever-present. This incident made me feel that it isn't worth the effort if a professor is not backed up by the administration. I am deeply concerned about the lowering of grades, but I feel powerless to do anything about it.

Participant C

Black Female
Age: 31 - 40
Rank: Asst. Professor
Degree: Masters
Position: Faculty

As coordinator of the University's Pre-School Program, one of my duties is to see that parents pay the fees for enrollment on time. I asked a parent about paying her fees since she was delinquent. The parent criticized my actions to the Dean of the College. The Dean approached me in writing about the incident. I felt that the Dean should have sent the parent to talk with me since I was in daily contact with the parent and her child. The Dean had never seen the parent before the incident. I felt that the chain of command, which is so highly stressed in Academia, was overlooked. I was made to feel powerless in my own shop.

Participant D

Afro-American Male
Age: 41 - 50
Rank: Assistant Professor
Degree: Doctorate
Position: Faculty

The critical incident occurred in connection with a doctoral candidate. I was her doctoral chairman and principal investigator of the grant from which she received financial support.

It was a disheartening string of events in which the administration seemed to move too deliberately and the student and I felt that we were being persecuted, or at least not taken seriously.

My involvement, in terms of supporting this student, led to reprisals from the P.I., because I was assigned to work as a faculty member with this grant re: practicum supervision and teaching courses. What occured is that all of the students with whom I was supposed to work were told that I no longer would be responsible for their practicum placement. This action was taken by the P.I. without my knowledge nor that of my department or department chair.

Because of no strong or swift action taken by the College of Education or my department I was left, virtually with no faculty assignment for 9 months.

Participant E

Caucasian Male
Age: 51 - 60
Rank: Professor
Degree: Doctorate
Position: Administrator

Critical incident was initiated when tenure was denied to a female instructor. As department chairperson at the time, I was named in lawsuit. Suit eventually reached federal district court and request of plaintiff was denied and the decision to deny tenure was upheld.

As department chair, I was unsure regarding the support the University was willing to give. Despite assurances by the Dean of the School of Education (my immediate supervisor), I could get no communication from the President of the University regarding the University's commitment in the event the plaintiff had been awarded damages.

In all fairness, I must admit the incident caused a great deal of bitterness on my part toward the University and University administration. In this second term as chairperson (after a six-month lapse), I am extremely cautious about decision-making. I now keep files on every faculty member, although I sometimes feel like a Gestapo agent from doing so. I follow every conversation concerning personnel actions with memoranda and I would be extremely reluctant to make a hard personnel decision without written assurances from my dean, the University administration, and the University legal office that my actions would be supported.

There is a positive result stemming from the incident, however. Following the incident, the University did announce that all department chairpersons would henceforth be covered by the University liability policies. Other than that, I can think of nothing positive about the situation.

Participant F

Caucasion Female
Age: 31 - 40
Rank: Associate Professor
Degree: Doctorate
Position: Faculty

The major "critical incident" was my vote of non-promotion by my department personnel committee, which had the effect of blackballing consideration by the college or university committees. This same committee (i.e., department committee) voted unanimously for tenure and rated me #1 in the department for the past 2 years for merit. Although I will admit that I was coming up early for promotion to full professor, I had been encouraged by my department chair (who did support me). My "sour grapes" comes from the fact that I feel that any objective evaluation of my accomplishments, especially in terms of research and publications and national visibility would indicate that I was far more qualified than any of the members who voted no (i.e., they averaged 3 publications each). I think the "old buddy system" was at work and that I just have to pay my dues in terms of tenure in the system.

This has had a negative effect in my performance in that I am less motivated, spend less time at work, have not written to the extent that I previously had, and am generally less productive. I have not let this effect my teaching, but I think that overall the department is not benefiting from this decision.

REFERENCES

Calia, Vincent F. and Raymond J. Corsini, Critical Incidents in School Counseling, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1973, pp.2 - 3.

Cooper, John F., "The Morale and Teaching Effectiveness of Junior College Teachers," Unpublished Dissertation, The University of California, Los Angeles, 1977, p. 10.

Corsini, R. J. and D. D. Howard, Critical Incidents in Teaching, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1964.

Flanagan, John C., "The Critical Incident Technique," Psychological Bulletin, 51:327-358, 1954.

Gloster, Emily D., "A Faculty Morale Study In A Community College," Unpublished Dissertation, Appalchian State University, 1975, P.11.

Hoffmeister, James K. and Donald R. Miller, "Work Atmosphere Questionnaire," Boulder, Colorado: Test Analysis and Development Corporation, 1976.

Pisoro, Samuel E., "A Study of Critical Elements in Teacher Effectiveness in Indiana City, Town, and Consolidated Schools," Unpublished Dissertation, Indiana University, Bloomington, 1958.

Ryans, D. G., "Characteristics of Teachers," Washington, D.C.: American Council on Education, 1960, pp. 79 - 83.

Young, Bettie B., "Anxiety and Stress: How They Affect Teachers, Teaching," National Association of Secondary School Principals' Bulletin, Vol. 62, No. 421, November 1978, pp. 78 - 83.